



Diggers Debate

You will need

- N/A

This activity could count towards

Scouts - Requirement 1, Explorers - Requirement 1,
Network - Requirement 2

Activity Details

Time: 20/30 minutes

£ £

Indoors & Outdoors

Team

S / E / N

Before you begin

- In this activity, the young people will discuss a statement relating to the topic of Archaeology, debating for or against the idea in the statement.
If any of the young people are unfamiliar with the concept of a debate, explain that they will be working in two groups, with Group A trying to persuade Group B and any other listeners that the statement is true, and Group B aiming to convince everyone that it is not.
Explain to the young people that they should think about whether or not they agree with the statement, but that in the debate they may be required to argue the opposite point of view. (Note: some young people may find this difficult.)
- There are different ways to end the debate. See the last section of instructions for the activity, step 11.
- Make sure that the young people understand the concept of Archaeology.
It may be best to run this activity after the young people have had an introduction to archaeology or visited a site.
- Decide on the topic of the debate.
Some examples can be found at the end of this activity sheet

Activity

1. Open by giving the statement for debate.
 - a. Discuss and briefly consider why people may disagree with it, and what some of their reasons might be.
2. Explain that the young people are going to take the two sides of the argument:
 - a. either agreeing with the statement, 'for' it (the proposition)
 - b. or disagreeing with it, 'against' it (the opposition).
3. Ask the young people to split into two groups, either the proposition or the opposition, based on their current opinion of the subject. If numbers are very uneven, ask a few people to move to the other side, to even out the groups.





Option for older groups and/or young people more experienced in debates:

The young people who agreed with the statement will be the Opposition and argue against it, and the young people who disagreed with the statement will be the Proposition, maintaining that it is true.

This helps the young people to see things from another point of view, but may be very difficult for younger or less confident Scouts.

4. Give the young people approximately ten minutes to come up with three arguments to support their side's point of view. Explain that they will have 60 seconds to put across each of their points, and they should try to give reasons for the points they make.
 - a. The time required for this preparation can vary depending on age or ability. Offer support to groups that need it, helping them to prepare their arguments.
5. Give each team another few minutes to nominate three people, one to present each argument they have come up with, and also a fourth person to summarise the group's argument at the end.
6. Decide which team will speak first.
7. The first speaker from the first team now has 60 seconds to make their point, and give their reasons. (Increase or reduce the time depending on the ability of the young people, but keep it the same for all speakers.)
8. The other team goes next, and their first speaker has 60 seconds to get their argument across.
9. Repeat steps 7 & 8 for the remaining two points for each team.
10. The fourth speaker from each team now has 60 seconds to summarise what their team has said.
11. You can choose to end the debate in different ways:
 - a. The young people could vote for the point of view they most agree with
 - b. The young people could vote for the team that made the best arguments
 - c. The leaders could decide which team has won
 - d. You don't always have to have a winner
 - You could ask the young people if they have changed their position from before the debate
 - You could ask them if they have learnt anything new?





Reflection

How much did you know about the topic before the debate? What did you learn during the debate? What did it make you think about? Is it important to work as a team and listen to other people's opinions?

A debate is what you make it, talk about something you find interesting; you don't have to be an expert on the topic, that is the whole point of discussing it.

Make it accessible

Debates can be quite daunting and so it's important to make sure everyone can take part and is comfortable doing so.

You don't have to run the debate as two teams pitted against each other, instead you could just have a group discussion where the young people can put their thoughts forward.

It's important to make sure everyone is comfortable with the topic, if any of your young people feel personally affected by the topic, it should only be discussed if they are happy to do so.

Change the level of challenge

There are many ways in which to run a debate. Keeping the format as described but changing the level of the challenge, you could alter the timings giving the young people more or less time to think about their arguments. To make it into a longer project, you could spend a couple of nights on the debate, one night allowing the young people to prepare and write out their speeches, then one night carrying out the debate.

It can be fun to make the debate more of a game, and there are many options for this, for example:

- setting short timelines for talking;
- asking everyone on a team to take part in presenting an argument, but with each person only permitted to say three words, so the team must work together to formulate sentences;
- make the debate more like a rap battle, saying that their sentences must rhyme or be spoken to a beat.

The options are endless.

Youth Shaped Guidance

As mentioned in 'Change the level of the challenge' there are so many options for how you can run the debate so maybe ask the young people how they want to do it. The young people could even run the debate themselves. Make sure the debate is on a topic they are interested in and not just one the leader has chosen.





Debate topic ideas

a. We should not dig up archaeological sites.

Is archaeology more destructive than productive?

How do we know when to stop digging?

When have we fully recorded the past of a site?

What are some examples of an archaeological site that should not be excavated?

b. Archaeology can represent everyone in the past.

Is it possible to collect everyone's stories from the past?

Should the community be engaged in excavation?

Does diversity need to be a key focus within the archaeological community?

How is archaeology, rather than history, helpful when trying to understand multiple perspectives in the past?

c. Objects in museums should be returned to their country of origin.

What is the meaning of repatriation and why is it important?

Why might a group request that an object be repatriated to/for them?

Whom does an object belong to - the person who found it, the community who made it, the country it was found in?

Who should make decisions around repatriation?

d. It is important to protect archaeological sites.

OR

e. We need more housing (amenities, roads, schools etc.) – building these is more important than protecting archaeological sites.

For whom are we protecting archaeological sites – academics, descendants, tourists?

What can we gain from visiting archaeological sites over reading about them in a book?

Say that a new shopping centre wants to build over a site. List the advantages and disadvantages of building over an archaeological site?

How can we, as non-archaeologists, protect archaeological sites?

